THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ELITE IN THE "MILLAT"

Brothers and Friends,

A tradition of Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him) warns us:—

> "Beware ! There is a piece of flesh in the body of man which when good the whole body is good; and when bad, the whole body is bad and that it is the heart."

I think as the human body has a heart, the *ummat* has a *heart* and mankind also has a *heart*. The entire human system depends on the proper functioning of the heart. If it is diseased or damaged (for which there can be many reasons) the body does not remain unaffected.

I know I am addressing the *heart* and *mind* of Kashmir. I do not say the "men of heart" (ahle dil). Because the term has a different implication and a special significance. It has sublimity attached to it.

The responsibility of the heart is to keep the different tissues of the body will nourished according to their needs. Some times the mind needs more blood and some times the feet. It is for the heart to look after their needs.

There are three conditions for the heart to fulfil its assigned function; the first is that it should be alive as life depends entirely on it, the second is that it should beat harmoniously. The moment the heart stops beating life comes to an end. We know how the Heart Specialists struggle to resuscitate the heart. There are different ways to do it, internal and external, which now include pace-makers. The third condition is that the heart should have warmth. It should not have become frigid or benumbed. These are the three requirements : *life, beating* and *warmth.*

This applies as well to the elite in the family, a locality and the *millat*. The elite should be alive, active and should have warmth (religious zeal). If any one of these qualities is wanting

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and the link between the elite and the masses is cut off, we can imagine the plight of the commonman.

When the Power House of an area stops working the whole locality is plunged in darkness. The elite of a *millat* are its *Power House*, its heart. History reveals that this *Power House* never stopped working. The history of the continued existence of the *millat* is, in fact, the history of the continued reformative activities of the elite. There were persons in every period who were alive (to their responsibilities), active and had warmth.

The main reason for the degeneration of the communities in the past ages was that their *Power House* had stopped working. It is the lesson we get from the history of the Jews and the Christians. The *Power House* of the Jews (rabbis) had stopped working after their prophets (peace be on them all) had departed. What was the duty of their elite ? It was to differentiate between right and wrong, provide right guidance, rely on Allah and have the courage to tell the truth under all circumstances. The following verse of the glorious Qur'an provides the evidence.

> "O ye who believe ! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah."
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> at—Tauba : 34.

The rabbis and monks were the respective *Power Houses* of the Jews and the Christians. If translated into our terminology these would mean *Ulama* and *Mashaikh* (plural of Shaikh). Some of the rabbis and monks used to appropriate others property without justification. They were not doing their duty properly, which means the *Power House* had stopped working. If the traffic constable leaves his post and guides a way-farer who has lost the way, he would be hauled up for laxity though he is doing yeoman's service to an individual. The real job of the rabbis and the monks was to offer correct guidance on points of their law (Shariat), practice abstinence and contentment.

But they became avaricious. They were not doing their job but devouring the fruits of others labours. The commonman works to make a living for himself and his family. The rabbis

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and monks used to share with commonman what he had earned, but they did not allow him to share their knowledge. They misguided the commonman for their selfish ends. They became mercenaries instead of missionaries. If we go through the history of different nations, we find that first their *Power House* stopped working; then people strayed from the *straight path*.

This is the history of every community. But the history of our *ummat* provides evidence that the *Power House* has not stopped working even for a brief while. There were always persons who said the right thing under all circumstances. The evidence to that effect is provided in the following tradition of the Prophet (peace be on him) :

> "Among my community (*ummat*) at every time there will be a group which will be on the right course and howsoever the people may oppose them and do not help them (the opposition) nobody would be able to harm them (the righteous)."

The greatest calamity for a community is that the elite, who form the *heart* of a place, may became inactive or lose their religious zeal. We have now to see whether these three qualities are found in us ; life, beating (activity) and warmth. If we are alive and there is no activity, the life becomes static and there is bound to be disorder in the *millat* as stagnant water developes an offensive smell. If there is warmth, i.e., link with Allah, love of the Prophet (peace be on him) fondness for Paradise and courage to tell the truth; then however one may conspire to misguide the *millat* it will not go astray. But if the heart stops beating no power on earth can revive it. If the tree loses its fertility, it may be watered variously but it will not bear fruits again. It will be cut down and used as fuel.

Gentlemen,

Our history tells us that there were persons at all times who had warmth of faith and love of Allah; that everybody used to feel the warmth including the passersby. We find that in India due to the presence of true mystics (*Sufi*) a wave of religious zeal and passion for righteous deeds ran through right down to common people. If there were even one such person in a town

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then ignorance, God forgetfulness and worship of mammon would not have their sway over the *millat*. It never happened that the entire *millat* had become degenerated. When Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia (rh) was in Delhi, it appeared that the centre of gravity of the muslim world was Delhi; high and low, rich and poor, poets and writers were all attracted towards his humble hermitage as if drawn by a magnet. Then Khwaja Nasiruddin Chiragh (rh) took his place. The entire area was filled with the aura and warmth of religious ardour. Let us take the example of Kashmir. Syed Ali Hamdani (rh) came here and converted the entire region to Islam. We still fell the benevolence (barkat) of his sincerity *(ikhlas)* and godliness *(lillahiyat)*. What was it due to ? It was the *(Islamic)* conduct *(akhlaq)* and *warmth* of the heart. The heart is small compared to the body, but this little piece of flesh rules the body. The proper function or dysfunction of the whole body is bound with it. The stagnation, greed and confusion among the elite are sign of degeneration.

I am reminded of an incident narrated to me by a respectable friend. He said: "There was a *wali*. He had pain in his knees. I was applying an embrocation on his knees. He had a large following. When his disciples *(murid)* sat around him, they used to be very quiet and disciplined. When he said anything, everybody would listen attentively. On that particular day of which I am talking, it was quite different. Everybody was talking as if it were a fish market. I was surprised; the holy man is here and nobody appears to be aware of his presence." When he noticed my surprise at the unruly behaviour of his disciples, he pointed towards his knee. I thought there was severe pain and I started massaging it. There was no change in the disorderly behaviour. He again pointed towards his knee. I started rubbing at that particular spot. Then he whispered in my ear that on account of the pain in the knee, he could not carry out his customary pre-dawn prayers *(tahajjud)* and what I saw that day was the evil effect of that lapse. I ask you if giving up of optional prayers by a holy man had its ill effect on the entire assembly, what would be the effect on the *millat* if a good

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number of the elite ignore their obligatory duties. What will be the commulative effect of the lapse of about fifty or more such persons ? What will be the condition of the *millat* if the majority of the elite of a place fail to perform their obligations ?

There was a time when *ulama* and sages used to think nothing of kings and viziers in telling the truth. Shaikh-ul-Islam Izzuddin Abdul Salam of Damascus was the greatest of the *Shafa'i ulama* and known as the "King of Ulama." He once admonished the ruler in a sermon. The ruler was annoyed. After a few days the ruler had some guests. They knew the ruler was displeased with Shaikh Izzuddin. They said to the ruler if there had been a great scholar like the Shaikh in their domain, they would have given him the honour he deserved. It was surprising that the ruler was treating the scholar in that unkind manner. The ruler realised his mistake but he thought that if he apologised, it would be an insult to him. He sent one of his ministers to Shaikh Izzuddin with a request that he might come to the Darbar and kiss his hands. The courtiers would see it and the matter would be over. When this message was conveyed to Shaikh Izzuddin he said that far from kissing the hands of the ruler, he would not like the ruler to kiss his hands (if he so wished).

A King of Delhi once requested Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janan (rh) that Allah had graced him with great wealth, he might please accept a part of it. He replied : "the glorious Qur'an lays down :

> "Say (unto them, O Mohammad !) the comfort of this world is scant."
>
> an Nisa : 77

India is part of the world and your kingdom is part of India. If I take a part of it, how much would it be ?

There are so may such true stories which give *warmth* to the heart. The love of worldly possessions is part of human nature:

> "And lo ! in the love of wealth he (men) is violent."
>
> al 'Adiyat : 8

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These examples of contentment and "freedom from want" and disregard for ostentation refurbish the faith and help develop resistance to the temptations of luxurious and extravagant living. Thus the *millat* could not be carried aways from the path of moderation like a blade of grass in a gust of wind the way most of the people are going these days.

It is not enough for the elite to be *alive* and *active* but they must have *warmth*. How do we get warmth ? We get it by reciting the glorious Qur'an, repeating the name, attributes and praises of Allah (*zikr*) bearing hardship in *His Way*, etc. The people who lived a life of resignation and contentment had not adopted austerity out of helplessness. It was in response to the voice from within. Their conscience pricked them. They did not like to be the slaves of wealth, power or authority.

There should be no place without such persons who are beyond reproach. Nobody should have the courage to say that such and such a person among the elite misguided him or one of them lacks knowledge or another did not tell him the truth. Nobody may allege that the elite were *sold*. It is the secret for the preservation of the *millat*. It does not matter if the number of elite is small. But they must be above reproach.

> "What happened when ye asked an evil act of Joseph ? They answered, Allah blameless ! We know no evil of him........."
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> Surah Yusuf : 51

These are the words the wife of potiphar spoke about Prophet Yusuf (peace be on him) when King Pharoah asked her: 'What is the truth, it has become the talk of the town." She replied: "the truth is that we did not find any weakness in him." These days also there is a similar confrontation in a different form. The temptations being wealth, power and authority. The attachment with religion should be such that no such thing should be able to entice the muslims away from their faith. When asked about the conduct of a muslim anybody may stand a witness and say: "We know no evil of him." The truth is that the stability of the *millat* is due to such *ahle-dil* that it could not be carried away from the *straight path*.

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The second point is that the work of (right) guidance and accountability (*muhasaba*) should continué at all times. The number of muslims offering prayers must increase. It should be observed whether or not the mosques are full. It is the duty of the elite to be watchful so that no evils have a chance of spreading, viz., drinking, gambling, etc. They should keep in touch with the masses and keep themselves informed that the common people are following the religion assiduously.

We should popularise the study of the glorious Qur'an. It is the best way to keep the common people attached to the belief in the Oneness of Allah (*tauhid*) and away from polytheism (*shirk*). The lessons dars of Qur'an should be imparted in every locality. This method has previously been employed for correction of beliefs and lacs of people benefited by it.

Hazrat Ali (rz) Said : Remember, I have heard the prophet (peace be on him) say : Beware ! "A mischief (fitna) will crop up shortly." I requested what will be the way out from it ? He said : "The Book of Allah."

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